

HABS
ME,
1-LEW,
1-

Lewiston City Hall
Southeast corner of Pine and Park Streets
Lewiston
Androscoggin
Maine

HABS No. ME-174

P H O T O G R A P H S

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20240

AMERICA'S CITY HALLS PROJECT

NAME LEWISTON CITY BUILDING

LOCATION Southeast corner of Pine and Park Streets, Lewiston, Maine

PRESENT OWNER City of Lewiston, Maine

SIGNIFICANCE It is remarkable that a small city in a poor state could build a first city building in 1871, lose it through a disastrous fire in 1890, and replace it in 1892. The boom in the textile mills allowed it. The exterior has remained absolutely intact. See II A for details.

PART I Historical information

A. Physical history

1. The minutes of the City Council meetings and articles in the local newspaper (Lewiston Evening Journal) provide all details.

May 2, 1890 City Council authorized the Building Committee "to accept plans from those to be submitted and employ an architect."

June 28, 1890 The City Council accepted architect's plans from the firm of Bingham and Spofford of Boston. The cost of the new building was not to exceed \$130,000.

October 1, 1890 Laying of the cornerstone

May 19, 1892 Dedication

2. Architect--see Zeroxed copy of a biography *
3. Builder--Bearce and Clifford--foundation
 E. S. Libbey and Co.--carpentry
 J. P. and James Murphy--granite
4. Original plans and construction: See Part II A
 There have been no exterior alterations. The original architect's plans cannot be found.
5. Alterations and additions:
 Interior alterations were done in 1973 when the third floor hall was converted to office space and small meeting rooms and an elevator was installed. Plans for this were made by Harriman and Associates, architects in Auburn, Maine.

- B. Historical context: See copy of manuscript* of an article entitled Lewiston's City Buildings--in particular pages 5 to the end. The first part describes the first city building and the fire which demolished it.

* Included in field records

PART II Architectural information

A. Exterior

1. The Form

The building is a massive brick structure in the classical baroque style. There are three bays in front on Line Street of 20 feet, 50 feet, 20 feet; the center bay being topped by a tower. There are five bays on the side on Park Street of 30 feet, 24 feet, 30 feet, 24 feet, and 30 feet.

2. The Materials

- a. At street level there is a rusticated granite base. The entrance is recessed, with an arch and supporting pilasters of granite.
- b. The walls are load bearing, wire cut, red brick with red mortar.
- c. The cornice, frieze, and other decorative trim are terracotta, matching the color of the brick. (Some of the cornice and frieze with its sculptured heads and garlands of flowers are in need of repair or replacement.)
- d. The roof was originally all slate from Maine quarries, but now only the turrets have the original material. The slate on the hipped roofs has been replaced with black asphalt shingles.
- e. The domes are copper with gold leaf (also needing repair).
- f. The entrance doors are oak with plate glass.
- g. The windows are wood, double-hung. (They are expected to be replaced with more energy-efficient double glazed metal sash.)

B. Interior

1. Layout

- a. The interior spaces are organized on three major levels with floor heights of 12 feet, 16 feet and 22 feet, respectively.

- b. The first and second floors are devoted to offices and work spaces on either side of a wide (14 foot) corridor. The lower floor is approximately 4 feet below street level.
- c. The top floor was originally an enormous large public meeting hall with a stage, and balconies on three sides. There, most civic events, as well as dances, prize fights, etc., were held until 1973 when this floor was sub-divided to provide much needed office space, along with a modest council chamber.
 - (1) The partitions enclosing the central work areas and the chamber do not go to the ceiling, but are only 8 feet high and are moveable.
 - (2) The ceiling (originally 32 feet) is still quite high (16 feet). It was lowered to the bottom of the balconies, which still remain, though unused.
 - (3) A central air handling system was installed to handle the above area.
- d. The enclosed diagrammatic plans show the basic space allocations as they exist today.

B. Interior (continued)

2. Description of interior

| | <u>Floors</u> | <u>Walls</u> | <u>Ceiling</u> | <u>Fixtures</u> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>Entrance Lobby</u> | original polychrome tile | classical wood panelling | original stamped metal decorative panels | pendant fluorescent lights |
| | marble stairs - treads and risers | lath and plaster simulated masonry joints | | |
| <u>Lower Level</u> | | | | |
| Corridor | terrazzo; sand color field with red border | lath and plaster simulated masonry joints | metal | pendant fluorescent lights |
| Offices | asphalt tile | lath and plaster simulated masonry joints | metal | pendant fluorescent lights |
| Stairs | wood treads and risers | wood balusters and dado | metal | |
| <u>1st Floor</u> | | | | |
| Corridor and Offices | asphalt tile on wood | wood dado, plaster and simulated masonry joints | metal | pendant fluorescent lights |
| <u>2nd Floor</u> | | | | |
| Council Chamber | carpet | 8 foot dividing panels | hung acoustic 2 ft. x 4 ft. panels | special air handling system; recessed fluorescent lights in ceiling |

C. Site

Orientation of the building

1. The major axis is north/south, with the entrance on the north facing Pine Street, not on the east facing the park, as did the 1870 building.
2. The park, now known as Kennedy Park, was a part of the original city plan laid out by the architect engineer Kelsey in 1852 for the Franklin Company on the site of the Harris farm.
3. See enclosed 1873 Birds-Eye-View of the city by Stoner to measure the growth of the city in twenty-five years.
4. The park is still basically a green, utilized mostly by the people in the surrounding neighborhoods. It is also used for group activities, such as the Franco-American Festival, a week-long activity.
5. Located in the park and associated with the City Building are the Civil War Monument by Simons and a concert-stand known as the Gazebo.

PART III SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: not to be found
- B. Early Views: actually there were no changes made, out an early photo is included
- C. Bibliography:
 - 1. Primary Sources: Minutes of the City Council for the year 1890 are to be found in the vault of the City Clerk in the present City Building.
 - 2. Secondary Sources:
Microfilms of the Lewiston Evening Journal are to be found in the Research Department of the Lewiston Public Library. See June 28 and October 1 of 1890 and May 19, 20, 21 of 1892 HISTORY OF ANDROSCOGGIN COUNTY, by Georgia Drew Merrill, published by W. A. Ferguson and Co., Boston, 1891
- D. None
- E. None

Prepared by

Gridley Barrows .I.A.
and
Geneva Kirk

Members of the Lewiston Historical Commission